FIDE Ribbon Cutting
Trident Training Facility, Kings Bay, Georgia
Remarks for VADM Kirkland Donald
25 Aug 04

(AS PREPARED)

Thank you, CAPT Lotring, for that generous introduction. Good morning, Congressman Kingston, Mayor Hase, Ms. McNeill, Mr. Camardo, distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen.

It's a great pleasure to be here today to celebrate a much-anticipated and truly revolutionary step towards the future of submarine training - the official opening of the Fleet Interactive Display Equipment.

Despite its rather non-descript name, this state of the art training device represents a giant leap forward in

what has already been one of the most successful training programs in the history of our Navy.

That success can be traced back to a foundation laid by the Father of our Nuclear Navy, Admiral Hyman G. Rickover. He had the vision of what the complex technology that was evolving from the splitting of the atom would deliver in terms of a revolution in ship design and in capability enhancement. He also knew that complex technology demands respect, discipline, and rigor in all that we do to harness that technology.

The Admiral knew that detailed, comprehensive, and realistic training was essential to the safe and effective use of nuclear power in Naval ships.

He invested in training from the very beginning: Nuclear Power Schools where we all learned the science. Land based reactor prototypes where we applied the science to the practical and where we developed and embraced a respect for the complexity of our craft through hands-on experience under the instruction of experienced operators on real reactors. On board ship, training continued, this time in the at-sea environment, developing skills and confidence in our ability to operate our plants in the harsh environment of the ocean's depths and in the heat of battle.

Always believing that if you are not moving forward, you are falling behind, leaders like Admirals Kin McKee, Bruce DeMars, Carl Schmitt, and now

Admiral Skip Bowman and Mr. Tom Beckett saw the need for another dimension of training.

Training that harnessed the power of the computer to bring realistic operational reactor training to the shore environment. Not a substitute for the critically important hands on training on real reactors, but rather a tool to improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of our training as we face ever more challenging operational environments and expanding missions in our ships today and in the future.

The Submarine Force is fortunate to be "first in line" to receive this new capability – a capability that gets to the essence of the Revolution in Training. Fleet IDEs will facilitate a new level of team training and team building in a realistic and challenging learning environment.

We will have more options as to when and where we do our training, saving precious at-sea time for operations best suited for that environment and using the classroom where collaborative training works best.

The ultimate measure of our success is our readiness for our mission – to project undersea dominance. We cannot expect our people to perform their jobs well without giving them the right tools and opportunities to maintain their proficiency. I believe we have met that obligation.

The tremendous effort and teamwork involved in setting up this first Fleet IDE was obvious to me during my recent visit and tour. The trainer realism is outstanding and the level of detail that's been built into the training program is remarkable.

Almost an entire department will be able to be engaged in every drill set - real time. Drill comments will have meaning to the entire department, because of their ability to observe what happened.

I understand the feedback from Kings Bay Sailors has been overwhelmingly positive and available times for usage have already all been booked up through October. This is a perfect example of the line, "If you build it, they will come."

The Fleet IDE was built on visionary dreams and advances in technology, and most importantly the hard work of many talented people. I salute and thank all those individuals already recognized by CAPT Lotring and CAPT Davis and all others who contributed to this effort.

Specific recognition is warranted for our partners at Lockheed Martin and Knoll's Atomic Power Laboratory for their work in designing and building this marvelous device. Through these combined efforts our Navy will be more ready and capable. We look forward to more FIDEs in other Fleet concentration areas serving our submarine and aircraft carrier forces.

The CNO, in his guidance for 2004, challenged the Navy's leadership to enhance fleet readiness through innovative use of simulator technology. To the operators and supervisors from our ships here in Kings Bay – a final word. You now have the resources to do just that. I have every expectation that you will help us meet that challenge, that you will train more efficiently and effectively while adhering to the tenets of discipline and formality in all propulsion plant operations.

Thank You.